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DAILY CONVERSATIONS IN CHINESE MEDIA

Prepared By: Bhaavya Gupta | Research Intern



writetous.orca@gmail.com

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NEWS IN CHINA

- [China and Central and Eastern European countries](#) jointly built a key project of the "Belt and Road", the Beno section of the Hungary-Serbia Railway in Serbia, which has been in safe and orderly operation for one year and has sent a total of 2.93 million passengers. The maximum speed of trains has increased from 40 to 50 kilometres per hour to 200 kilometres per hour, and the quality and efficiency of transportation have improved. The running time of the train from Belgrade to Novi Sad has been reduced from 90 minutes to about 30 minutes, which greatly shortens the travel time between cities along the line. The Chinese side has arranged for 30 professional and technical personnel to provide 10-month follow-up guidance to the operation and maintenance personnel of the stations along the line and to cooperate in emergency response and holiday transportation guarantee work. The high-quality service guarantee work of the Chinese team has improved the professional skills of Serbian railway operation and maintenance, maintained the quality of line equipment and facilities, and ensured safe and stable transportation. China Railway International Co., Ltd. will promote the construction of the Novi Sad-Subotica-to-border section of the Hungary-Serbia Railway in Serbia, striving to complete and put it into operation as soon as possible, and make new contributions to promoting the deepening cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European countries.
- Li Zhan, the [chief economist](#) of the research department of China Merchants Fund, said that the real estate market in 2023 must be an upward process, but the full recovery of the market depends on longer-term factors, including residents' income and future expectations. The national real estate

market has stabilized since the beginning of this year, and some hot cities have even ushered in the long-lost "Xiaoyangchun". Li Zhan said that first-tier and high-energy cities are of great significance to the weathervane of the national property market, and that if prices or transaction volume slowly rise from the previous bottom, the amount of real estate will gradually rise. He also predicted that the year-on-year growth rate of total retail sales of consumer goods may reach 5% this year. Consumption has grown significantly this year, with a 3.5% increase from January to February, but the height of the rebound was not high due to the weakness of automobile consumption due to factors such as the halving of the car purchase tax and the withdrawal of the new energy vehicle state subsidy policy. However, new energy vehicles are still performing well, and large and medium-sized cities, especially first- and second-tier cities and provincial capitals, will recover the fastest.

- Zhang Feng, the founder of [Huitian New Materials](#) (300041. SZ), was taken into criminal detention on March 17 on suspicion of manipulating the securities and futures markets. The company is a high-tech enterprise specializing in the research and development, production and sales of adhesives and other new materials. Its main business products cover high-performance organic silica gel, polyurethane adhesive, epoxy resin adhesive, anaerobic adhesive, and acrylic adhesive. It has won many honours and has maintained stable profitability. Zhang Feng is suspected of stealing and manipulating the securities and futures markets and could face prison and a huge fine if found guilty.

Article 182 of the Criminal Law stipulates that whoever manipulates the markets and affects the trading prices or trading volume of securities and futures can be sentenced to fixed-term imprisonment or criminal detention.

- [PetroChina](#) announced on March 19 that China's first land-based liquefied natural gas membrane tank supplied 40 million cubic meters of natural gas in the first winter supply guarantee task. The film tank, located in Cangzhou City, Hebei Province, has a total capacity of 29,000 cubic meters and a daily gasification and gas supply capacity of 1 million cubic meters. It is the largest single capacity and the largest number of membrane tanks in the world, and it uses 90% less steel than traditional gas storage tanks and reduces carbon emissions by 27%. With the commissioning and operation of this tank, China now has a full industrial chain of natural gas reserves from ocean to offshore, and from inland to inland.

SOCIAL MEDIA CHATTER IN CHINA

- **Netflix's [The Glory Part 2](#) is a viral sensation in China**, captivating viewers with its gripping plot and polished production. The Glory Part 2 has earned an amazing 9.2/10 on the Chinese review site Douban, and the hashtag for the second season gained 1.47 billion views on Weibo. The Glory is without a doubt the greatest Korean drama of recent years! One Weibo user gushed, "I'm really obsessed with it. One person said, "It's a terrific drama! Together, the two seasons tell a gripping and fulfilling story.
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It follows a survivor of high school bullying who seeks revenge on her former tormentors. The first season of the K-drama, written by Kim Eun-sook and directed by Ahn Gil-ho, first premiered on Netflix in December 2022 and the second season was released on March 10, 2023. Song Hye-Kyo, who plays the bullying survivor, is a well-known Korean actress in China, having gained popularity through leading roles in romantic dramas such as *Autumn in My Heart* (2000), *Full House* (2004), and *Descendants of the Sun* (2016).

of Chinese coercion implies that CEE citizens are growing increasingly inclined to assist other Asian democracies. Finally, India is more and more likely to be viewed as a prospective geopolitical partner by CEE nations.

INDIA WATCH

- The Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries have always maintained cordial relations with India. With the US and China engaged in a "Cold War" for the past three years, India plays a vital geostrategic role in the region to balance Chinese influence. However, the CEE's outlook on India remains ambiguous. Yet, there are three ways in which the new Sino-American "Cold War" is likely to change how CEE views India. First, it's more likely than ever that CEE will view India as an economic counterbalance to China. India obviously cannot provide CEE with what China can. However, due to mounting pressure from the US and EU to restrict Chinese investment in infrastructure and telecoms as well as waning support for China and its 17+1 arrangement, CEE is starting to view India as a more secure and straightforward trading partner than China. Second, countries in Central and Eastern Europe are more inclined to perceive India as a fellow democracy as a result of US influence. Additionally, recent Czech and Lithuanian activism on Taiwan in defiance
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